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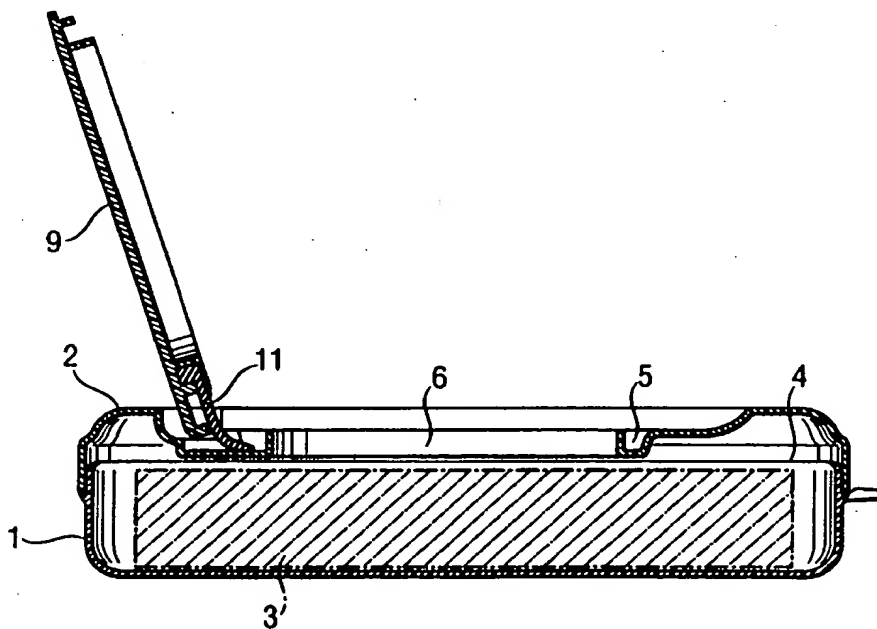
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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/US97/20283</p> <p>(22) International Filing Date: 10 November 1997 (10.11.97)</p> <p>(30) Priority Data: U9602838 8 November 1996 (08.11.96) ES</p> <p>(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY [US/US]; One Procter & Gamble Plaza, Cincinnati, OH 45202 (US).</p> <p>(72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): PERICH, Francesc [ES/ES]; Avenida Pau Casals, 48, E-08450 Llinars de Valles (ES). BITOWFT, Bruce, Kevin [US/US]; 310 Compton Road, Wyoming, OH 45215 (US). HILL, Simon, David, Julian [GB/DE]; Alwinenstrasse 13, D-65189 Wiesbaden (DE).</p> <p>(74) Agents: REED, T., David et al.; The Procter & Gamble Company, 5299 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45217 (US).</p>		<p>(81) Designated States: AU, CN, KR, US.</p> <p>Published <i>With international search report.</i></p>

(54) Title: CONTAINER FOR LAMINAR ARTICLES



(57) Abstract

A container (1) for laminar articles (3) comprising a first cover (2) having an opening (6) hingedly closed by a second cover (9). The opening is for dispensing laminar articles (3) folded one by one in zig-zag fashion. The laminar articles are sealed initially by a tearable seal (4). Opening of the second cover (9) occurs by pressure applied to the first cover (2) to release the retaining device and an elastic flap (11) to open the second cover (9) automatically thereafter.

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CONTAINER FOR LAMINAR ARTICLES

The present application relates to a containing case for laminar articles provided with an easy opening closure and means for withdrawing the articles one by one.

Known in the art are containers for holding laminar articles folded inside it in zig-zag fashion, which articles are withdrawn one by one through an opening smaller than that of the folded articles inside the container in order to prevent the emergence of more than one at a time. These containers have an articulated cover destined to close the said opening, which is situated in a depression in a larger cover closing off the container. This is the case of the container disclosed in utility model No. 9600309 applied for in the name of ARBORA HOLDING, S. A.

Experience has shown that opening the articulated cover is inconvenient because access to the edge of same is difficult. Moreover, a certain manual effort has to be made in the direction of openings in order to release a pressure device which retains the cover in closed position.

Apart from the disadvantages outlined, it should be noted that the small-towel dispensing containers currently known in the art are of considerable capacity and size, inappropriate for carrying in a bag. When a user wishes to have a small number of towels for use during short trips, then the towels can only be removed from the usual container and placed in another smaller container which will not be provided with suitable means for withdrawal and closure.

The containing case for laminar articles object of the invention has been designed in order to solve the disadvantages outlined, being especially suitable for holding a smaller number of articles than are normally held in the usual containers, and easily transportable in a bag, despite which it is provided with means for easy opening and withdrawal of the laminar articles one by one.

This case is of the type which comprise a tray of shallow depth closed by means of a first cover. Inside the tray are housed the laminar articles folded one by one in zig-zag fashion. On the basis of this known embodiment, the case is essentially characterized in that the tray is sealed from origin by means of an impermeable and

tearable seal, while the first cover presents an opening with means for one-by one removal of the laminar articles. This opening can be closed by means of a second cover articulated in the manner of a hinge on the first cover and subjected to pressure in the closed position by a retaining device.

The opening for withdrawal of the articles is smaller than that of the folded laminar articles, according to a known embodiment, while it is characterized in that its outline presents some wings projecting towards its interior, combined with inlets of the outline itself, to form narrow passageways through which part of the laminar article passes under friction, preventing withdrawal of more than one laminar article at a time.

The second articulated cover is of substantially rigid nature, while the first cover of the case is more flexible and elastic. In the vicinity of the zone of articulation of the second cover is attached at least one flexible and elastic flap which tends to keep it open, so that when exterior pressure is brought to bear on the first cover it releases the retaining device of the second cover, which opens automatically.

Between the first cover and the second cover, means for allowing the opening of the second cover with respect to the first one by an angle of 180° are provided.

For a better understanding of all that is set out in this specification some drawings are attached which show, solely by way of example, a practical example of embodiment of the case.

In said drawings, Figure 1 is an upper plan view of the cover of the case; Figure 2 is a cross-section view of the case with the cover detached from the tray; Figure 3 is a cross-section view of the case with the first cover attached and the second cover open; Figure 4 is a view similar to that of Figure 3, but with the second cover closed; and Figures 5, 6 and 7 are plan views of the opening through which the laminar articles are withdrawn.

In the drawings, the containing case for laminar articles comprises a flexible and elastic tray 1 of shallow depth to which is incorporated a detachable cover 2. Housed in the tray 1 are a plurality of laminar articles, such as moistened hand towels folded in zig-zag fashion, of general reference 3, protected ex-factory by means of an impermeable and tearable laminar seal 4.

On the cover 2 there is a depressed zone 5 with an opening 6, 6a, 6b (Figures 5, 6 and 7) which is smaller than that of the folded towels 3 as a whole. This opening presents around its outline some wings 7, 7a, 7b projecting towards the interior which, combined with some inlets 8, 8a, 8b, form narrow spaces through which part of each towel passes under friction as it is withdrawn, preventing more than one coming out at a time.

On the depressed zone 5 is articulated a second cover 9 much more rigid than cover 2, by means of a hinge device 10, which upon lowering closes the opening 6, 6a, 6b, 6c this position remaining stable owing to a conventional retaining device (not shown) between covers 2 and 6, 6a, 6b and 6c.

Beside the hinge 10, the cover 9 incorporates at least one flexible and elastic flap 11, which rests on the zone 5 of the cover 2, in such a way that it tends to open the cover 9. The flap can be made of a different piece or it can be a prolongation of either of the covers 1 and 9.

Provision has been made also for the flap 11 to form a single piece with the two covers, one end being attached to the cover 1 and the other one being attached to the cover 9.

When the cover 9 is in the closed position, the cover 2 merely has to be pressed in order to deform it slightly and release the retaining device which keeps the cover 9 in closed position, which cover then opens automatically driven by the flap 11.

It is foreseen that the covers 1 and 9 are provided with means for allowing the opening of the cover 9 by an angle of 180° with respect to the cover 1.

The case described is especially suited to transportation thereof in a bag or the like and for making available a small, though sufficient, number of towels for use over a certain period of time, without need to carry a conventional container of towels, of larger capacity but inconvenient to transport in a bag or the like. Moreover, the case has a special opening for emergence of the towels or articles contained in its interior, which opening prevents the withdrawal of more than one towel at a time. Furthermore, opening of the articulated cover 9 is very simple, it being sufficient to press on the elastic cover 2. To show the user the most suitable point for application of pressure on said cover 2, marking lines 12 have been provided.

Independent of the object of the invention are the materials used for manufacturing of the components of the case, the forms and dimensions of same and all the accessory details which might be presented, as long as they do not affect its essential nature.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. Containing case for laminar articles provided with easy opening closure and means for withdrawing the articles one by one, of the type which comprises a tray of shallow depth closed by means of a first cover inside the tray are housed the laminar articles folded one by one in zig-zag fashion, essentially characterized in that the tray is sealed from origin by means of an impermeable and tearable seal, while the first cover presents an opening with means for one-by-one removal of the laminar articles; this opening can be closed by means of a second cover articulated in the manner of a hinge on the first cover and subjected to pressure in the closed position by a retaining device.
2. Containing case for laminar articles provided with easy opening closure and means for withdrawing the articles one by one, with an opening for withdrawal of the articles which is smaller than that of the folded laminar articles, according to claim 1, characterized in that the outline of the opening presents some wings projecting towards its interior, combined with inlets of the outline itself, to form narrow passageways through which part of the laminar article passes under friction, preventing withdrawal of more than one laminar article at a time.
3. Containing case for laminar articles provided with easy opening closure and means for withdrawing the articles one by one, according to claim 1, characterized in that the second articulated cover is of substantially rigid nature, while the first cover of the case is more flexible and elastic; in the vicinity of the zone of articulation of the second cover is attached at least one flexible and elastic flap which tends to keep it open, so that when exterior pressure is brought to bear on the first cover it releases the retaining device of the second cover, which opens automatically.
4. Containing case for laminar articles provided with easy opening closure and means for withdrawing the articles one by one, according to claim 1, characterized in that means for allowing the opening of the second cover with respect to the first one by an angle of 180° are provided between the first cover and the second cover.

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Fig. 1

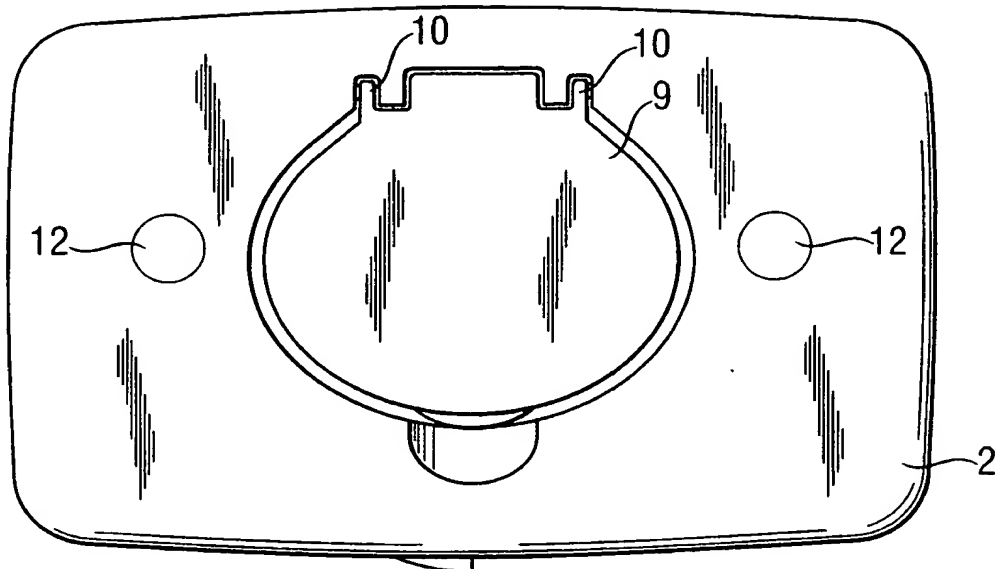


Fig. 2

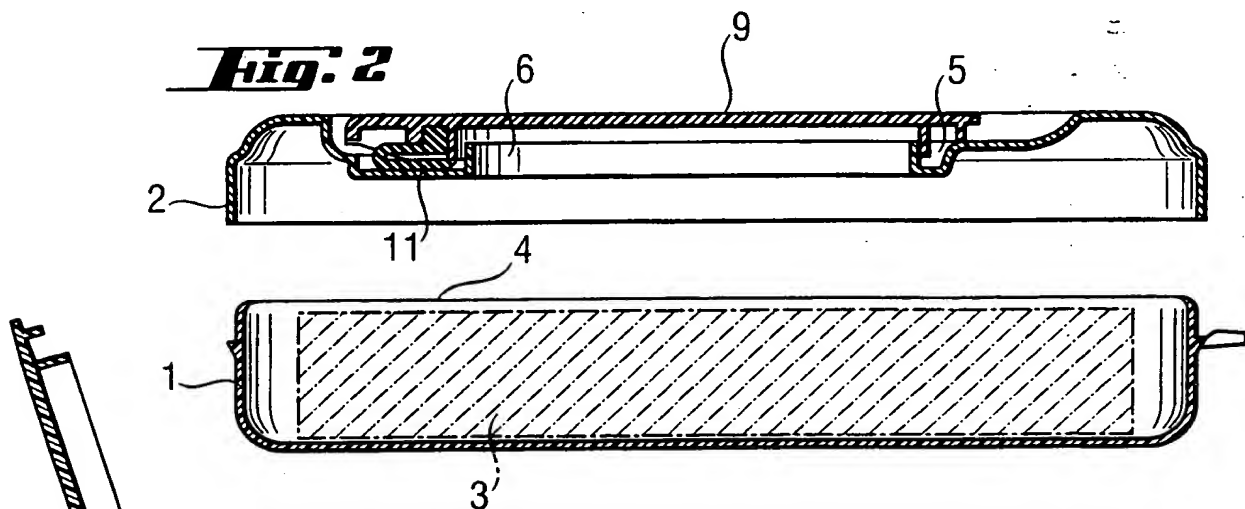
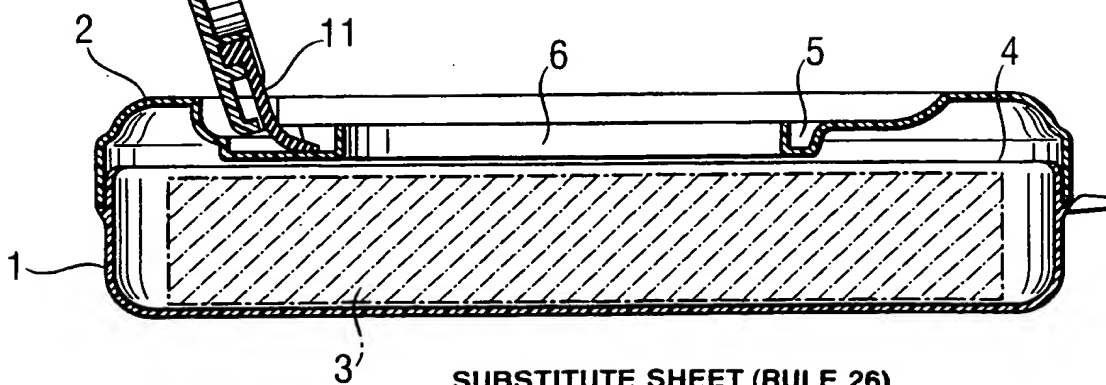


Fig. 3



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Fig. 4

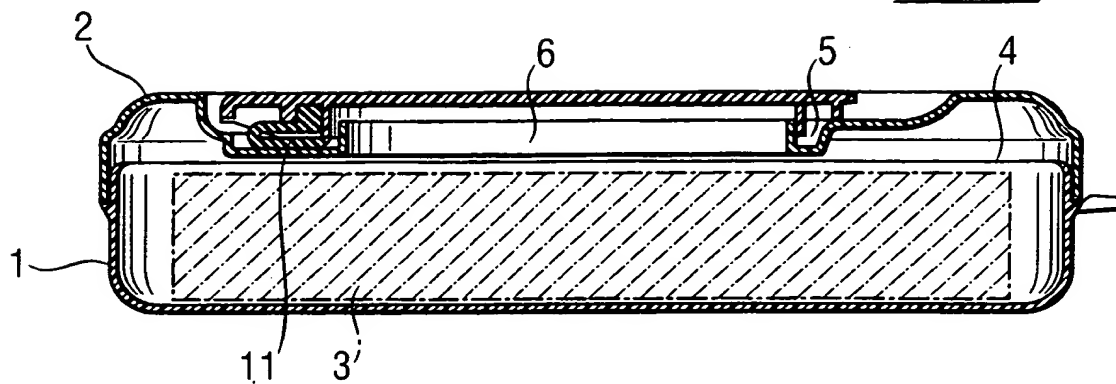


Fig. 5

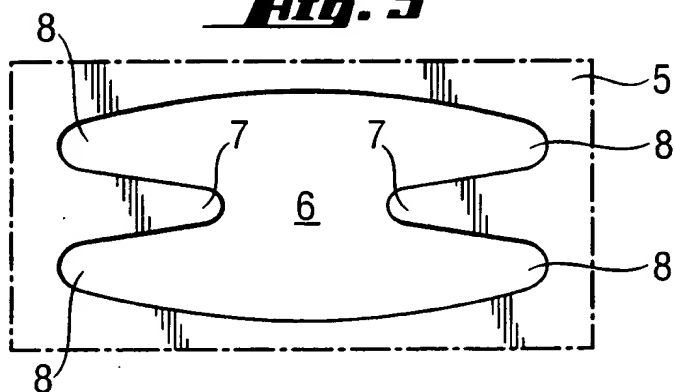


Fig. 6

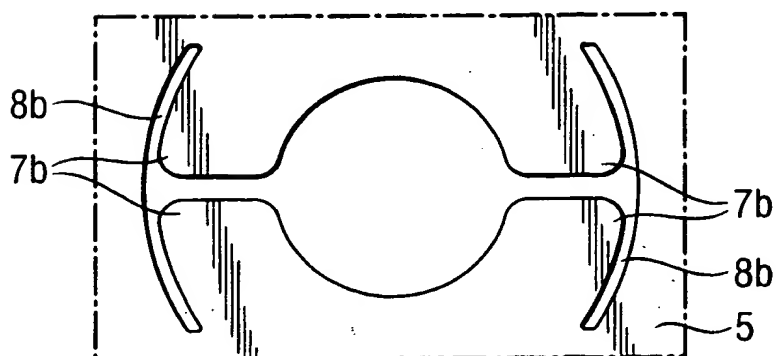


Fig. 7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) :B65D 73/00

US CL :220/258, 259, 281, 335; 206/494

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 220/258, 259, 281, 326, 335, 263, 264; 206/494, 1.5, 823, 581, 233; 215/235, 237, 301

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
noneElectronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
none

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X, P	EP 748,748 A (ISHIKAWA et al.) 18 December 1996, see entire document.	1-4
X	US 5,542,568 A (JULIUS) 06 August 1996, see entire document.	1,4
Y	AU 77,021,944 A (LIEN) 10 August 1978, see entire document.	2
Y	US 4,739,900 A (BORST) 26 April 1988, see entire document.	3
A	US 5,050,737 A (JOSLYN et al.) 24 September 1991, see entire document.	1-4
A	US 5,501,348 A (TAKEUCHI) 26 March 1996, see entire document.	1-4

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